

Town of North Smithfield Planning Board

Kendall Dean School, 83 Green Street

Thursday, October 16, 2014, 7:00 PM

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

1. Roll Call: Present: Art Bassett, Scott Lentz, Lucien Benoit and Dean Naylor. Also in attendance were Town Planner Robert Ericson, Town Solicitor James Lombardi III and (later) Asst Town Solicitor Stephen Archambault.

2. Approval of Minutes: Motion by Gene Simone to approve the September 18, 2014 minutes as corrected. Second by Art Bassett with all in favor (4-0).

3. Disclosure: This is the point where anyone can disclose potential conflicts related to matters before the Board. Each member has the option to recuse under RI ethics regulations or abstain from voting for other reasons. There were no disclosures.

4. Preliminary Plan, Minor Subdivision: Oxford Creek

Applicant: Gordon F. B. Ondis

Location: Rocky Hill Rd

Assessor's Plat 20 Lots 16 & 52

Zoning: RA

Discussion, vote or other action by the Planning Board. Atty Joseph

Shekarchi requested an additional postponement to the November 20 meeting and waived the 45-day review requirement. Dr. Benoit moved that the Oxford Creek application be heard on November 20. Second by Mr. Bassett with all in favor.

5. Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing: Introduction to the Comp Plan process and discussion of the most important issues for consideration.

Mr. Ericson opened the discussion of issues that have arisen since 2006. He discussed the old Comp Plan requirements (the Town has been grandfathered) vs the new requirements (not yet completed but onerous in draft form).

He reviewed the multi-site national park, in which Slatersville provides the best example of a planned mill village. Dr. Benoit expressed his doubts about whether the national park would ever be approved. Mr. Ericson replied that the Department of Interior designation allowed RIDOT to add features to the Slatersville Stone Arch Bridge renovation/widening. It will have pedestrian walkways on both sides and pedestrian improvements to the church green.

He discussed the period from 1650-1820, including the relationship between the Nipsachuck battle fields and the mill village. Dr. Benoit asked whether the battle site was up for sale. Paul Soares commented that property provided access to the site but did not

include the site.

Mr. Bassett asked about the mill apartments in park development. Mr. Ericson replied that the new owners are very community-oriented and have continued to keep the display hall open to the public. He doubted that the site would be appropriate for tour bus parking, because the residents would probably complain.

Beginning the energy element discussion, Dr. Benoit asked about Mark Depasquale's participation in reconstruction of the Portsmouth wind turbine. Mr. Ericson noted that there was probably significant state money in that rehab.

He discussed the Town energy strategy, beginning with the School Department investments in 2009-11 and continuing through the current Solarize NS project. He mentioned Lowell's recent purchase of a discounted renewables-based electricity portfolio that includes all residential accounts. Mr. Bassett noted that Fidelity has its own electric distribution company.

Mr. Naylor discussed the possibility of a senior center. Mr. Ericson noted the recent failure of the Burrillville senior center bond and described the Lincoln (senior) Center available to North Smithfield seniors for \$15 per year. Scouter's Hall is also being improved for senior use during the daytime.

Mr. Ericson discussed STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) and the idea of a product design/manufacturing/fulfillment incubator on the ATP site (Great Rd). He noted that RISD was recently voted the top design school in the country. Dr. Benoit asked to what extent low income housing would be included. Mr. Ericson replied that it would be live/work spaces within the building.

He also explained the limited value of state approval of a Comp Plan. Mr. Lentz asked if we were outlining the chapters. He asked how much could be put into appendices. Mr. Bassett noted that that would allow plug-in updates.

6. Planning update: Summary of new developments with the Comprehensive Plan, Invest in NS bond, new commercial and manufacturing projects, planned bridge work, applications in the pipeline, BRV Heritage Corridor projects, energy projects and meetings schedule.

Mr. Lentz asked about MS4 and how it worked. Mr. Ericson explained that MS4 stands for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (as opposed to combined stormwater and wastewater sewers in some cities). The US EPA grants RI and other states MS4 permits to administer development. RIDEM in turn gives local MS4 permits to the towns and other agencies. He explained the ecology of DEM enforcement. Dowling Village got extraordinary oversight because

Carolyn Shumway complained about RIDEM to the EPA.

Dr. Benoit asked about the building that would be divided into five units near PetSmart. Mr. Ericson said GNC and Supercuts were certain, but he did not know about the other tenants.

7. Adjournment: Dr. Benoit moved to adjourn. Second by Mr. Bassett with all in favor (4-0). The meeting ended at 8:53.

Submitted by Robert Ericson on October 24, 2014

Approved by the Planning Board on November 20, 2014